

March 30, 1999

REPRESENTATIVE SCHAKOWSKY CALLS ON SPEAKER HASTERT TO PROTECT MEDICARE

CHICAGO, IL -- Citing the importance of Medicare to the 39 million seniors and persons with disabilities who rely on the program, U.S. Representative Jan Schakowsky (D-IL) today called on House Speaker Dennis Hastert (R-IL) to work in a bipartisan manner to devote 15% of the budget surplus to strengthen and preserve Medicare.

Representative Schakowsky, appearing today at a news conference with senior citizens, Representative Danny Davis (D-IL), representatives from Citizen Action Illinois and labor and consumer groups, said, "In this Congress, Democrats have a plan to save a successful social insurance program that serves and improves the quality of life for millions. This is an historic opportunity, and I urge Speaker Hastert to join in our efforts."

Schakowsky also called on Hastert to resist any proposals in Congress similar to the one approved by the Bipartisan Commission on the Future of Medicare that would privatize Medicare by turning over the program to for-profit managed care corporations.

"We are here to send a clear and loud message don't turn Medicare over to the HMOs. HMOs are not the answer. They are the problem," Schakowsky said.

The Republican budget, recently passed by the House of Representatives, fails to extend the solvency of Medicare. On the other hand, the president's plan would ensure the solvency of Medicare by using 15% percent of the budget surplus to extend the life of the program until the year 2020.

"In their budget, which I did not support, the Republicans have failed miserably. Instead of extending the life of Medicare, they are attempting to send the program to an intensive care unit, and then, when no one is looking, turning off the life support system."